

# EXHIBIT E

March 15, 2006

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OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



Governor Christine Gregoire  
Office of the Governor  
PO Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

I am writing to you about the conscience rights of pharmacists in the State of Washington. The central issue at stake is the protection of the religious freedom of individuals to provide healthcare services in a manner consistent with their moral beliefs.

Mandating that persons provide services to which they morally object would violate their right to exercise religious freedom guaranteed in both the federal and state Constitutions. In recent years, however, it has become increasingly clear that the rights of individuals to follow their conscience are not adequately protected. An example of this would be requiring pharmacists to dispense drugs that would violate their conscience, drugs like Plan B, an emergency contraceptive that is a potential abortifacient.

The United States has long recognized the right of its citizens to exercise their conscience in the face of laws that contravene their religious beliefs. Individuals do not lose their right to exercise their conscience once they enter the health profession. In order to fully protect pharmacists, this civil right must extend to pharmacists who may be requested to dispense a drug to which they conscientiously object. We have a tradition and a body of constitutional law that have protected the right to act in accord with one's conscience.

Legal recognition of the civil rights of pharmacists in no way infringes on the rights of patients. Access to healthcare is a right that WSCC strongly supports. Patients do have a right to receive health care services, but they do not have a right to force any particular individual to provide them. Forcing pharmacists to choose between conscience and government places them in the untenable position of violating the civil law or violating their conscience.

I ask that you respect the religious freedom founded in our law and encourage the Board of Pharmacy to enact a conscience clause for pharmacists. I thank you in advance for your willingness to consider our concerns.

Sincerely,

Sr. Sharon Park, OP  
Executive Director

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